

Mind Mapping uses for the ADHD Student—*bringing it home*

Mind mapping is now one of the latest crazes in life management tools offered to individuals in the business sector down to the college student. You can find free online software and premium purchased programs to suit the needs of anyone seeking to streamline ideas and become more productive and efficient at their work or now...schooling.

It uses the natural way a brain works by creating pictures that show ideas in a system that links them in the same way that they are represented in your brain. You can find posted research showing that people who use mind mapping save time each week by using mind mapping software. The three most areas cited for benefits were clarity of thinking, managing information overload and improved organization for people using the software. For someone with ADHD, this mind mapping can be a huge benefit, as it reinforces the visual nature that so many people with ADHD use that is a key part of their learning system and daily functioning. Corporations are purchasing mind mapping software to boost employee output by becoming more efficient. The application in the education field can benefit students who lack organizational skills and aid in their time management.

The concept of mind mapping is not a new idea to educators who have used color coded visual aids for years to point out key concepts for students. An example might be in a color coded outline a professor might have for an up and coming test. The Professor may organize key points for a study guide through visuals, color coding and levels of importance. The natural organization of mind mapping and how the mind works to link and categorize helps retain the information.

As an educator and academic coach, I have seen the benefits of mind mapping software for students who feel overloaded, need direction with their academic life and long term goal setting. When they come into my office, they bring a lot of energy, thoughts, and ideas but often lack the ability to organize everything into a workable plan. I am often amazed at their ability to generate ideas with such creativity, but lack the ability to put it into a sequential action. The act of walking them through a mind map software program helps them gain confidence in their ideas and follow a workable plan. The result is higher self-esteem, clarity and motivation to complete a desirable goal.

A great benefit of mind mapping computer software programs is the ability to easily add and modify new ideas as the student thinks of them. ADHD people have a generalized reputation for being creative and thinking out of the box. So many times, the ideas are fleeting thoughts without anywhere to log them for future use. The use of the mind mapping software offers a convenient place to put the idea down and weave it into the centralized goal.

Bringing Home to the ADHD Student

ADHD can be a talent and gift when ideas, dreams and ambition are narrowed to a defined goal. The mind mapping computer software compliments this by visualizing and linking ideas systematically to become more organized. When one is organized, it gives energy and drive to accomplish goals and become highly productive. The Mind Mapping software has proven to be a great tool.

Another use for mind mapping can be to enhance the daily life a person with ADHD. Structured daily practice for ADHD students in mind mapping benefits them immensely by developing a habit of organizing ones thoughts automatically. Used as a daily practice tool, it becomes second nature. This consistent application of mind mapping naturally trains the ADHD mind to use this “tool” when faced with difficult tasks. It translates to better daily living such as: mind mapping the flow of each day by starting with a central goal for the day and how it will be accomplished.

Mind mapping software is, also, a good tool for long term planning for high school students. It can help strategize a student’s desire to go to college from high school. The focus of the mind map might be college and then organized strands of how to make this work. The mind map might have several strands: financial, academic, family support and steps to take strand. The added use of colors can be an important piece for the visualizing component as to what is the most relevant strand/branch for the student’s immediate focus. The ADHD student can rapidly add onto different strands with the software as new ideas come into mind. The benefit to a computerized image of the mind map is the ability to add/modify or change various parts. Also, the student can assess if the new data compliments or diverges from the main goal quickly with the imagery of a mind map software program. . The ease of change with the computer compliments the rapidly changing ideas so inherent of a person with ADHD.

The Mind Mapping software has found its way into many applications in the business and educational world. As with any software program, there are many to choose from and research is crucial to finding a good one for the student population. Equally important is finding someone who has a lot of experience using the mind mapping software programs to guide you through a workable plan to suit individual needs. Check with your local resources for knowledgeable people to help you in this endeavor.

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